


# MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Alan W. Wattles

## Across The President's Desk

### Why electric co-ops replace utility poles

By Abby Berry

You probably don't pay much attention to the utility poles found throughout Monroe County Electric Co-Operative's (MCEC) service territory, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of our distribution network?

Strong, sturdy utility poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely inspect the thousands of poles found on our lines. Throughout the year, our crews check poles for decay caused by exposure to the elements. They know which poles are oldest and conduct inspections through a rotational process. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Occasionally, poles need to be replaced for other reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation and car crashes are potential causes for immediate replacement. When possible, MCEC communicates when and where pole replacements will take place so that you stay informed of where crews will be working.

#### Here is a quick breakdown of how crews replace a utility pole:

When a pole needs to be replaced, crews will start the process by digging a hole, typically next to the pole being replaced. The depth of the hole must be 15 percent of the new pole's height.

Next, the new pole must be fitted with bolts, cross arms, insulators, ground wires and arm braces – all of the necessary parts for delivering safe and reliable electricity. Then, crews safely detach the power lines from the old pole. The new pole is then raised and guided carefully into position, and the lines are attached, leaving the new pole to do its job.

So, the next time you come across a MCEC crew replacing a pole, use caution and know that this process ensures a more reliable electric system for you, our members.

*Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



## Come join us for our fall area member meetings!

All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

- Monday, Nov. 2 - Monroe County Electric Cooperative (in back)
- Thursday, Nov. 5 - Bully's Restaurant (meeting room), Columbia
- Thursday, Nov. 19 - Hecker Community Center, Hecker

Our area member meetings have been scheduled for three locations in the cooperative area during November. Come and learn more about your cooperative and hear current news and information about the power industry. Each membership will receive a \$5 bill credit. Light refreshments will follow.

# MCEC linemen do well at Lineman's Safety Rodeo



Three electric linemen from your cooperative participated in the 18th Annual Linemen's Safety Rodeo held at Lincoln Land College in Springfield on Friday, Sept. 18. Participating this year were Journeyman Lineman Gary Gilbert, Journeyman Lineman Chris Deterding and Journeyman Apprentice Matt Kish.

The rodeo coincided with a series of courses designed to help electric line personnel improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways.

Line personnel competed in five team events and three individual

events. Team events included hurt man rescue, egg climb, single phase capacitor changeout, switch operator with S & C load break tool, and H-structure obstacle course.

The three linemen did very well and placed first in two events; the Switch Operator with S & C Load Break Tool and the H-Structure Obstacle Course. They also came close to finishing in the top three for total points.

Congratulations, Gary, Chris and Matt!



*Pictured left to right: Journeyman Linemen, Gary Gilbert and Chris Deterding, and lineman apprentice Matt Kish.*

## MCEC line outages - September 2015

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Substation
09/16/15	0:46	4	S Rd	Small Animals or Birds	Poe
09/24/15	5:50	22	Allschied/Cedar Lake Subdv	Other, Deterioration	N. Waterloo
09/24/15	2:09	246	Algonquin Forest Subdv	No Cause Code	Millstadt
09/25/15	0:54	6	Nelson Ln	Other, Faulty Equipment	East Carondelet

### Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • 800-757-7433

## Ten 2016 IEC Memorial Scholarships available

**P**resident/CEO Alan Wattles has announced that the Illinois electric cooperatives in 2016 will award nine academic scholarships to high school seniors through a memorial scholarship fund designed to financially assist deserving students in the “electric cooperative family.” In addition, a tenth scholarship – to assist with costs in attending an electric line worker school – will also be offered.

This year, there will be a total of ten scholarships at \$2,000 each and will be awarded in 2016 through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Five scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A sixth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. Three additional scholarships are reserved

for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

The tenth annual scholarship, the “LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship,” was awarded for the first time in 2011. This \$2,000 scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the line worker’s school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. LaVern McEntire served as a lineman for McDonough Power Electric Cooperative from 1949 until 1991. He and his wife, Nola, endowed the scholarship to financially assist deserving individuals in becoming trained line workers. Sons and daughters of co-op members; relatives of co-op employees or directors; and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for the line worker’s scholarship.



For more information regarding the scholarships, contact Allan Masterson, Director of Member Services at 939-7171, 1-800-757-7433 or by email at [amasterson@mcec.org](mailto:amasterson@mcec.org). All necessary paperwork has also been sent to area high school guidance counselors and is also available for download at the cooperative’s website at [www.mcec.org](http://www.mcec.org). Go to “Member Info” at the top and then “Downloads” on the left side, 2016 IEC Scholarship information at the bottom.



### TURNS OUT, MONEY BURNS WHEN MY WATER HEATER IS SET ABOVE 120 DEGREES.

I didn’t even know there was a dial. Now, I’m saving \$73 a year by turning my water heater down to 120°. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

# Help our dispatchers provide you better service during power outages!

**M**CCEC representatives take your outage calls during normal business hours which are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. After hours and on weekends/holidays, outage calls are taken by our answering service which is CRC. There are a few simple things you can do to help our dispatchers provide you with better service.

**It is important that we have an up-to-date main phone number for your account. Please call us if it has changed or if you're not sure - 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433.**

**During normal business hours: (Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)**

- 1) **Have your address ready.**  
When you call in during the day, the member services representative (msr) will ask you for the address where the outage is occurring. They may verify some additional information once your account is up on their screen.

**MCEC members should get a live person when calling in an outage during normal business hours. After hours, the members will either get a live CRC representative or an automated attendant that will ask them to input their information.**

- 2) **Did you hear or see anything just prior to the outage?** They will ask you this to give the linemen an idea of what the outage may be caused by.
- 3) **Are your neighbors also out of power?** This question helps us determine if we have a line

outage or an individual outage. If your neighbors are out, they will probably start looking for the cause closer to the substation. Their priority is to get the power back on safely as soon as possible.

**After hours: (4:30 p.m. – 7:30 a.m. weekdays plus weekends and holidays) Live person answers.**

- 1) **Name, address & phone number.** If the member calls in after hours, and if a live representative from our after-hours service, CRC, answers, they will ask the member to verify their name, phone# and address where the outage is occurring.
- 1) **Did you hear or see anything just prior to the outage?** The representative from CRC will also ask this question and will add it to their outage entry for the benefit of the linemen dispatched. They will also ask if their neighbors are out of power.

**After hours a member gets an automated attendant.**

- 1) **Have phone number linked to the account ready.** During a large power outage or if there are widespread outages across the Midwest, the member may get an automated attendant that will ask for their phone number. If that phone number does not show up as being linked to an account, it will ask for the account number. Have your account number posted by your phone for a quicker response to your outage. The account number is listed on your bill.



## Holiday cooking efficiency tip:

Every time you open the oven door to check that dish, the temperature inside decreases by up to 25 percent!

Hold off on peeking inside so that your oven doesn't have to work harder than necessary to heat holiday treats.